

Oakland News

By Linda Ross Aldy

Condolences to the family of Patsy Burt Williams who was laid to rest Saturday in graveside services at Oakland Cemetery. Patsy was 91 years-old and was one of four siblings who grew up in Oakland. Her siblings were Joe Lee Burt, Dale Burt, and Jane Burt Pray. Patsy was named Queen of Yalobusha County during her high school years. She enjoyed a career as a real estate agent and a bookkeeper in the Memphis area. Patsy leaves a son, Burt, in Oklahoma, and a daughter, Cindy, in Memphis as well as eight grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

My siblings and I recently had pillars and a plaque installed at the entrance of the Oakland Cemetery in honor of our parents, Richard and Margaret Jean Ross. In part, the timing to was to honor our Daddy's 100th birthday year. We also planned to have gates installed and got that done last week one day after our Daddy's 101 st birthday. I wasn't able to join the sibling team to supervise the installation (oldest siblings always think they are supervising, right?), but they did a great job. I have the best siblings--Janet, Carol, Rich, and Martha. I can't express my appreciation enough for them. They always support my crazy ideas and help keep me excited about things that I jump off into.

Right now, I've jumped off into the 2026 Mississippi Legislative session. I represent the Town of Oakland as their volunteer lobbyist and The W, my alma mater. There are so many names to remember at the Capitol—174 legislators, hundreds of staff, weekly changes of the House and Senate pages, plus dozens and dozens of lobbyists and a daily rotating

group of local constituents. I get tickled when two certain legislators call me "Oakland" as we pass through the halls without time to stop and chat. I love it because I know they associate me with my hometown! While Oakland has only one Senator elected to represent us, Senator Ben Suber, I collect other Senators (and House members) as I make connections. One Senator has bought hunting land in Oakland, another grew up going to Cossar State Park, one is next door to us and has lots of friends in Oakland, one had relatives who lived in Oakland years ago. I tell them all I have made them honorary Oakland Senators. The same thing with The W—so, so many have W connections.

This past week, the Senate Public Health Committee, chaired by Sen. Hob Bryan of Amory, held a hearing on The W's nursing program which is ranked as the number one school in Mississippi and in the top 4 percent nationally. Some interesting data points shared with the Committee include The W has the lowest federal loan debt of any public Miss. university; it leads in graduate earnings of Pell grant graduates four years after graduation with an average earning of \$53,231; it had the highest enrollment percentage growth at 8.1 percent of the public universities; it was named the #1 public university in Miss. by money.com; and it ranked highest in the state among "Best Colleges for Your Tuition (and Tax) Dollars" by Washington Monthly.

One of the nursing graduates who testified was Dr. Katina Holliday, originally from Aberdeen and now of Los Angeles. She has a re-

markable personal story and has built an amazing company and non-profit organization in LA. She is giving back to hometown and her home county by establishing a health clinic and a grocery store there. Her right-hand woman is one of her best W friends, Twila Cain Proctor, originally from Vaiden. As I visited with them over dinner the evening before the hearing, I told them about Marquitrice Mangham who opened our grocery store, Pharmacy Marketplace. Twila looked startled and grabbed her phone and showed me where she had just had a call from Marquitrice. They met last year at a housing conference on the Coast. Both Katina and Marquitrice have received national attention for their work and I'm proud to know them both and to serve on the non-profit board, In Her

Shoes, Inc., that Marquitrice founded. It's definitely a small world and Mississippians are making a difference across the nation.

Before I retired "from paying work" four years ago, I worked for nearly 20 years as the Executive

Director of the Mississippi Optometric Association which gave me the opportunity to attend multiple national meetings each year. I am so honored that the American Optometric Association has invited me back to its Presidents Council, held this year in Orlando, to conduct two workshop sessions. The Presidents Council brings together the newly elected state officers to gain additional leadership training and to compare notes on issues in the individual states. Mississippi has an active presence on the national front including the AOA Im-

mediate Past President Dr. Steven Reed of Magee who will rotate off the board in June.

I look forward to seeing Oakland Mayor Stephanie Patterson and several members of the Town Board at the Capitol this week as the Mississippi Municipal League hosts its annual Winter Conference.

Don't forget to put Sat., May 2, on your calendar for Oakland's Yalo-Ribbon Festival. We have Danica Hart of Chapel Hart fame as our featured musical act. If you are interested in being a sponsor or vendor, contact Chamber Executive Director Sue Donohue Smith at execdir.oaklandareachamber@gmail.com.

Please share your news with me at oaklandareachamber@gmail.com or leave a message at 601-853-3942.

Smith Chapel M. B. Church 3695 CR 211 Coffeeville

Smith Chapel M. B. Church, Coffeeville, Ms, will be having Pastor and Wife's 25th Anniversary on Sunday, January 25, 2026, at 3:00 p.m.

Speaker will be Elder Richard Smith.

Looking forward to seeing your presence. Thanking you in advance.

Smith Chapel Church
Elder Richard Smith
Pastor

Zion Spring M. B. Church

Please join us for a Christian Education Conference on January 20-22, 2026 @ 6:30 nightly.

Tuesday: Lecture: Rev. James Howell.

Sermon: Rev. Melvin Montgomery-Faith & Grace Baptist Church, Grenada, MS.

Wednesday: Lecture: Rev. James Howell.

Sermon: Rev. Billy Geanes-St. John Baptist Church, Ripley, MS.

Thursday: Lecture: Rev. Timothy Daniels.

Sermon: Rev. James Howell-Bethlehem Baptist Church, Falkner, MS.

Your presence will be greatly appreciated.

Rev. Tommie Daniel,
Pastor



Tillatoba News By Patcie Deck

The children are settled back in school and things are back to normal.

Those few days of warm weather lasted long enough for them to enjoy being outside.

Diane Dukes had friends from Virginia visit her Monday afternoon. Rickey Nations and his wife Vickie had a good visit. They wanted to know if Diane wanted to go to Greenville and stay for three days, but she had to pass them up.

Joanna Pullen had a Birthday Party at Five Roses. Five Roses is an old barn that was renovated into a nice place for family, gatherings. It is owned by Diane Dukes There were lots of friends family and as Joanna said,"all my best friends are here." Everyone enjoyed visiting and talking to others.

"Time sure is moving fast said Martha Box and the more I try to do

the further behind I get." No exciting news this week . Did have lunch at the Corner Store Wednesday with sister Joyce Stevens and brother Jesse Wartham.

Got to see Candy and the crew there.

Jesse has been down

with cough , congestion then pneumonia! Thank Heavens he is better now . Bet he was tired of Joyce and I nursing and feeding him.

So wonderful to see such a beautiful sunshine Sunday. And what a great sermon at Willow Springs AOG Sunday. I so enjoy church with so many kinfolk and friends . Bro.Tommy Darby, really shared through scripture how God is always with us . Love how he gets our heart and mind on our relationship with the Lord !

My neighbor, Deborah McCool said they had some things they had to do Sunday morning and later went to Batesville and had lunch.

Your writer and David had a good time Sunday with friends, Susan and Philip Bell of Caledonia, Donna Garripoli , Brad, Frankie and Bradley Holliday of Grenada. We had a good time just being together. Susan and Phillip left going back to Caledonia Monday .

Happy birthday to Max Lindley and Kerri Elizabeth Harris on the 15th, Trevor Croy, Racheal McCullar and Jimmy Dees on the 16th, Jeri Lynn Prigmore and Cindy

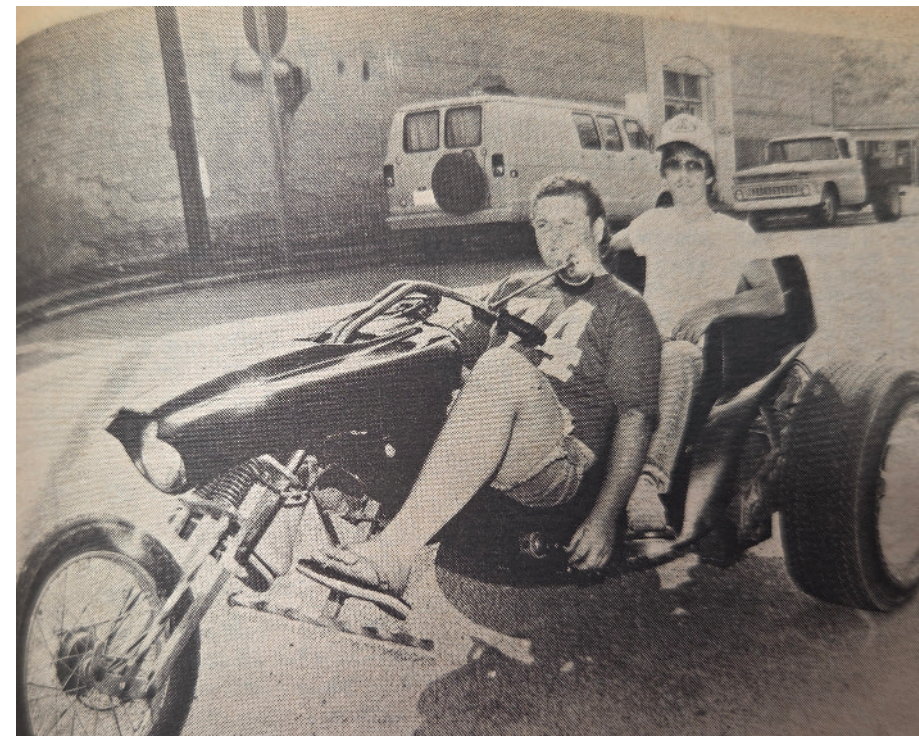
Traywick Baton on the 17th Linda Darby and Danny Jackson on the 18th. I hope you all have a wonderful day on your birthday.

Recipe for the week:

- vanilla wafer cake**
- 1 1/2 cup sugar
- 6 eggs
- 1 12 ounce box vanilla wafers
- 1 1/2 cup of margarine
- 1/2 cup whole milk
- 1 12 ounce package coconut
- 2 cups pecans, chopped
- Put finely crushed pecans, vanilla wafers, and coconut in a large bowl, cream sugar, margarine, and eggs, one at a time. Beat after each egg. Add milk. Poor and mix well into dry ingredients. Bake in tube pan one hour at 325° cool 15 minutes before taking it out of pan.

Thought for the day....

"I walk around like everything is fine, but deep down, inside my shoe, my sock is sliding off."



Last week's "Who Is It?" was Lady Pirates seniors with their coach, coach Bernadette Sayles, Char'Tia Tuner, E'Miyah Kimbleand Stephanie Ratliff, The girls graduated in 2016. Kenetria Turner and Casssandra Tittle correctly identified these ladies. If you would like to identify the "Who Is It?" please call the Courier at 662-675-2446 before noon on Monday or call and leave a message or text 662-458-8939.



Cemetery Gates--Rich Ross helped to oversee and install the new gates to the Oakland Cemetery. The children of Richard and Margaret Jean Ross had the brick pillars built a few months ago and finished their gift honoring their parents with the gates. Rich, along with his sisters, Linda, Janet, Carol and Martha used the anniversary of their daddy's 100th birthday in 2025 as impetus to improve the entrance.



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